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UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

Note verbale dated 6 October 1992 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations has the honour to report on the Chinese Government's implementation of the programme for the activities during the first term of the United Nations Decade of International Law, as follows:

The Chinese Government has consistently adopted a supportive attitude to the activities of the Decade of International Law, and actively participated in and organized the programme for the activities during the first term. In 1990, the Chinese Government put forward four proposals on the activities of the Decade of International Law and submitted a memorandum in this regard. The programme for the activities during the first term adopted by the General Assembly session of that year inscribed two of the proposals made by the Chinese Government. As the programme for the activities during the first term approaches completion, the two proposals made by the Chinese Government have been materialized and implemented.

1. From 12 to 14 August 1991, with the cooperation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other agencies, the Chinese Government hosted a Symposium on Developing Countries and International Environmental Law, in which 32 experts and scholars from 17 countries and relevant international organizations, including Mr. Mostafa K. Tolba, Executive Director of UNEP, United Nations representatives and Justices of the International Court of Justice took part. Premier Li Peng met with the participating experts and scholars. State Councillor and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen was present at the opening ceremony and delivered an opening speech. Experts and scholars from developing and developed countries explored the main issues in the

activities surrounding international environmental law from the perspective of the development and codification of international law. The final report adopted by the Symposium made seven recommendations for further consideration in developing international environmental law.

2. From 24 to 26 August 1992, the Chinese Government hosted another Symposium on Developing Countries and International Law. International relations have in recent years undergone profound changes. Under such circumstances, the Chinese Government felt it necessary to explore developing countries' contribution to international law and the status of the education, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law in developing countries. Thirty-four experts and scholars of international law from over 20 countries and relevant international agencies, including the United Nations Under-Secretary-General, the Legal Counsel, Mr. Carl August Fleischhauer, and Judge Mohamed Shahabuddeen and Judge Ni Zhengyu of the International Court of Justice, participated in the Symposium. Vice-Premier Yao Yilin of the State Council of China received the participating experts and scholars and listened to their views and comments on the United Nations Decade of International Law and the education, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law in China. State Councillor and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen took part in the inaugural session and delivered an opening statement. The Symposium received 24 papers from the participants, who had an extensive exchange of views on the following topics: (1) developing countries' role, status and influence in contemporary international law, their contribution to it and their attitude to traditional international law; (2) how to reflect developing countries' special needs and characteristics in the codification and progressive development of contemporary international law; how to strengthen and promote cooperation between developing and developed countries in the field of international law; (3) how to enhance developing countries' ability for the education, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law and their ability to take part in the codification and progressive development of international law. The Symposium participants are generally of the view that developing countries, having made enormous contributions to the codification and progressive development of contemporary international law, have become a force to be reckoned with. Many developing countries, primarily relying on themselves, have trained a contingent of competent specialists of international law, who are playing an important role in international law and various spheres of the United Nations. The role of international law is increasingly important in regulating international relations while the teaching and study of international law is the basis for the further development of international law. At present, an urgent task facing developing countries is to strengthen the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law, especially in developing countries' institutes of higher learning and research, to further enhance the quality of international law teaching by improving instruction, case analysis and teaching. Participants felt that the Symposium was timely and would give a vigorous impetus to cooperation and exchanges between developing countries in the area of international law teaching and study and that it was concrete support to the United Nations Decade of International law.

3. The Chinese Government has drawn the attention of the Chinese Society of International Law to the programme for the activities during the first term. The Society hosted an International Symposium on the Teaching and Study of International Law at Beijing from 17 to 21 August 1992. Thirty-nine professors, scholars and legal professionals from 11 countries participated in the Symposium. The Chinese Society of International Law had representatives, mostly middle-aged and young, with 70 per cent of the Chinese participants below the age of 40, at the Symposium, which among others had the following six items on its agenda: (1) the general situation of international law teaching and study; (2) the international law component in the curriculum of law schools; (3) the theory and practice of international law; (4) the relationship between international law and other related disciplines; (5) methodology and information for teaching international law; (6) the cultural exchanges and dissemination of international law. Symposium participants presented high-quality papers on these topics and made adequate review. The Chinese Society of International Law made sufficient preparations for the Symposium beforehand. Prior to the Symposium, the Society held two seminars in Beijing (northern region) and Shanghai (southern region) on the teaching and study of international law, in May and June 1992 respectively. Apart from scholars of international law from academic and research institutes, officials and experts from legislative and judicial departments and government also took part in the two seminars.

The Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations would be obliged if the Secretary-General can have this note distributed as a document under agenda item 128.